



## Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**  
September 18, 2008

### **19<sup>th</sup> annual statewide homeless conference to present a variety of resources to assist Arkansas' homeless population**

The Arkansas Interagency Council on the Homeless will host the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Homeless Conference on Oct. 13-15 at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel in North Little Rock. The Council's mission is to "alleviate the condition of chronic homelessness".

In Arkansas, there are hundreds organizations that work on the problems of homelessness in the state. Last year they served more than 15,000 homeless Arkansans. The groups' collaboration over the years has led to the development of homeless shelters across the state and services to homeless people such as meals, job training and medical and mental health care. The Interagency Council is made up of State and local agencies that deal with homeless issues and network to solve problems in their area.

"This conference will feature a wonderful variety of workshops and talks designed to help educate people dealing with homeless issues and the public about the needs of the homeless population and the resources available to meet those needs," said Clorinda Arace, Homeless Coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

The conference kicks off Oct. 13 with an opening session and two guest speakers, Michael Stoops of the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, D.C., and David Pirtle, keynote speaker and former homeless person who helped organize residents of a Washington, D.C., shelter that was in danger of closing.

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He saved the shelter and he himself transitioned out of homelessness,” Arace said. Pirtle now serves on the national board of the National Coalition for the Homeless as well as traveling the country with the Faces of the Homeless Speakers Bureau.

In addition to the guest speakers, participants will take part in various workshops throughout the event, which culminates Oct. 15 in a breakfast and panel discussion featuring the success stories of formerly homeless people. The workshop topics include: Homeless Management Information System, sponsored by Housing and Urban Development; drug, alcohol and domestic violence programs sponsored by Health Services; “A Comprehensive Approach to Delivering Services,” presented by the Continuum of Care network; and special issues workshops highlighting populations with special needs, mental health issues, grant writing, volunteer management, the new 211 information system, 2010 Census, Networking and the Benefit Bank.

The cost of the conference is \$75, which includes all conference materials, two lunches, one breakfast, all breaks and a reception. Participants can also attend one day only for \$50 and can download a registration form at <[www.arkansashomeless.org](http://www.arkansashomeless.org)>. The deadline for registration is Oct. 10. The Council has also arranged with the Wyndham for special room rates, \$82 for one person and \$10 for each additional. To get this rate, contact the hotel directly at 501-371-9000 and mention the special rate for the Arkansas Homeless Conference.